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ABSTRACT

This paper is a comment on the need for review and reanalysis of the accumulated research in social studies as a guide to future efforts to design useful and desirable social studies curricula. Several alternative models for social studies educators are noted. These serve as guides to possible directions for research. The problems of communication of research findings is explored and the author suggests strategies for improving the quality of social studies research and for unifying research efforts. Appendices are included which describe a course entitled "Research in the Teaching of Social Studies" taught by Dr. Oswald at Syracuse University. (SHM)

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"Exemplars and Proposals for Social Studies Research"

James M. Oswald
American Universities Field Staff

Paper presented at a session of the College and University Faculty Assembly, Fifty-Second Annual Meeting of the National Council for the Social Studies, Boston, Massachusetts, November 21, 1972. This paper is based on the research in the preparation of Research in Social Studies and Social Science Education: Introduction, Analyses, and Reviews of Research (Boulder: ERIC ChESS, in press). For analysis of doctoral research consult the work of Richard E. Gross (Stanford University). For doctoral research more recent than 1970 consult the work of Dr. June Chapin (College of Notre Dame). Consult the research section in the October issue of Social Education each year. Another summary analysis is in James P. Shaver (Utah State University) and A. Guy Larkin's (University of Georgia) "Research on Teaching Social Studies," in Robert M.W. Traver's Second Handbook of Research on Teaching (in press). James Oswald is director of the Intercultural Social Studies Project of the American Universities Field Staff, Hanover, New Hampshire 03755.

"Analyses are difficult undertakings. At best they are efforts to clarify. At worst, they can be petulant diatribes, unworthy and uninteresting. Through analysis, major points can be extracted and inspected with different frames of reference. Equalities and inequalities in research studies can be brought to light and studied intensively. Assumptions can be ferreted out. The scalpel of logic can serve in analyses, whether they are autopsies or efforts to reveal inner brilliance as in diamond cutting."[1]

The cumulative research in social studies and social science education is in continual need of analysis. And this is problematical in a field with so little basic research and so much research about

secondary or peripheral matters. It seems that social studies research has been long on the descriptive and short on the analytical. Perhaps this is as it should be. The variables involved in social studies education are many and their interrelationships are dynamic and complex. But if the large base of social studies research which has been accumulated since the 1920s is to be of any use, it somehow must be reviewed and reanalyzed at least periodically. Like a pile of bricks, which is really an unassembled wall, social studies research has too often resembled an unrelated pile of discrete events. With the assistance of numerous others, we have attempted to "stack the bricks: to bring the body of social studies research into a format which permits accessability and can lead to analysis. From a stack of bricks one can build a variety of useful and desirable structures.

Future efforts to design useful and desirable social studies curricula ought early in the effort to review and analyze the resources "stacked" in the ERIC ChESS research resource, Research in Social Studies and the Social Science Education: Introduction, Analyses, and Reviews of Research.[2] It provides cross-referenced access to "no fewer than twelve hundred investigators ... in the field of social studies education" during "the first six decades of this century...."[3] The manual provides five sections:

I. Research in Social Studies and Social Science Education - an introduction

II. Analyses of Research in Social Studies and Social Science Education.

III. Twelve Research Reviews (1941, 1950, 1960, 1963, 1965, 1966, 1967, 1968, 1969 and 1970)

IV. Bibliography

V. Cross-Referenced Index with 1200 entries. It also provides two exemplars, two models of analytical reports.

A. The Social Studies Educator
- by Charlotte Engelbourg

B. Experimental Classroom Studies of Teacher Training, Teaching Behavior, and Student Achievement
- by Barak Rosenshire

In the former it is shown that the social studies educator is rarely trained as a researcher while the latter shows how little correlation there has been between student achievement and teacher training and classroom behavior. These are open studies. They can be challenged. They can be replicated. Both challenge and replication are desirable. To our knowledge, neither has been challenged or replicated. This response is an indicator, an "unobtrusive measure" of the lack of two desirable scientific traits. What exists in their absence is a pattern of individual discrete non-analytical positing of new un-correlated hypotheses and the gathering of mostly inconsequential data possibly associated with if not correlated with social studies education. The statement is purposely strong. It is, of course, an overstatement -- largely but not quite completely true. If the statement were absolutely true, then neither the Engelbourg or the Rosenshire studies could have been done. The purpose it serves is to point out two important fields of inquiry, so rich that we are totally surrounded with easily accessible data which can be tested against the hypothetical statement.

"What is painful about analysis is the cutting away of what once seemed important. The process, however, often reveals what is most important.[4] What is important in social studies education is to find out what works. It is also important to find out what does not work. The findings of over twelve hundred investigations over six decades provide many useful and some disappointing clues to what works and with whom and under what circumstances. Perhaps during the time plateau of the 1970s we would be well advised to re-analyze, re-integrate, re-plicate.

That is what I have been trying to do through a course called "Research in the Teaching of Social Studies" SED 635 at Syracuse University.[5] The course has one goal "To improve social studies education," seven purposes and eight objectives, any of which can be met by doctoral or masters or bachelors degree candidates. Frankly, it might not be a bad high school course. And, fortunately, the time of judgment has not yet arrived. Beginning in August, you can be the judges. The "irradiated tracers" we will have released by then are named Lawrence Ames, Linda Biemer, Kyung Soo Cha, Charles Currin, Mahmoud Fahmy, Albert Leonard, and William Stembler. If on analysis they are not exemplars, try to analyze why not and do not travel down the path we have trod. Meanwhile, do not look only at these seven. Study the models for social studies educators developed by Raymond Muessig at Ohio State and Lawrence Metcalf at Illinois University, and Donald Oliver at Harvard, and Jim Shaver at Utah State University, and Frederick Smith at Indiana University, and others, possibly better than any of these. This field of social studies is rich with alternative models. In communication and transfer of models it is poor.

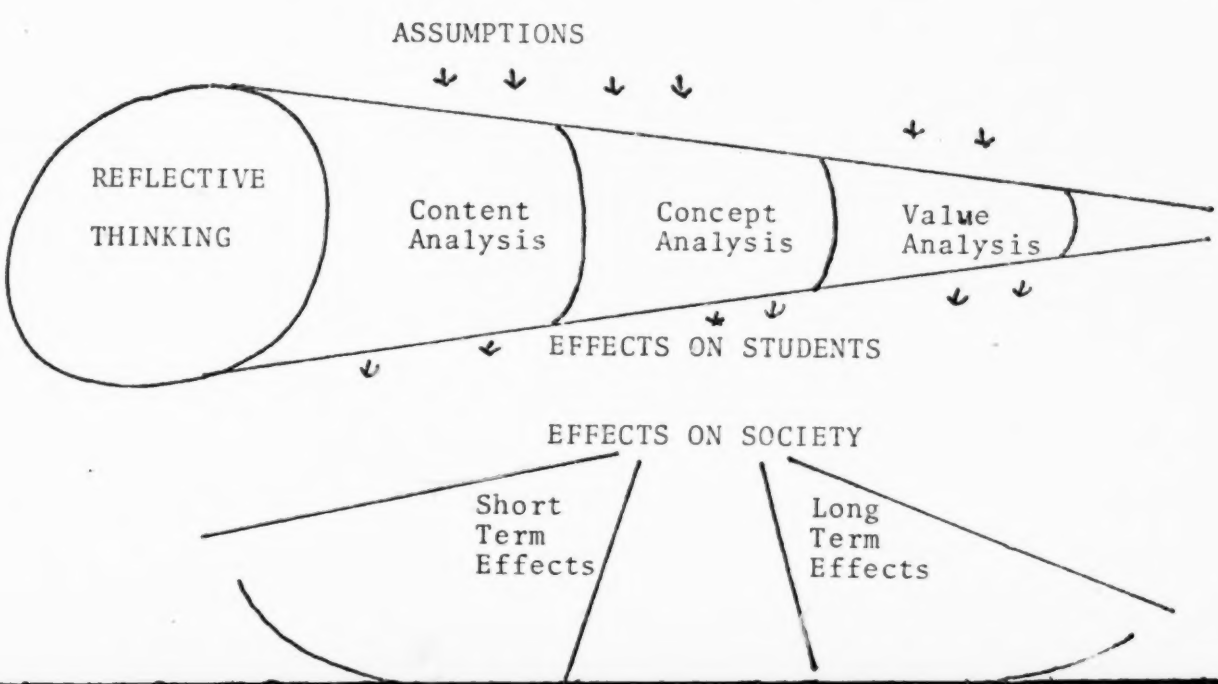
ANALYSIS AS A GOAL

As for models, none are totally satisfying but there are several fairly well developed which, even though incomplete, serve to point in plausible directions. Keep in mind that the usefulness of a model is in its ability to clarify true relationships and to predict the consequences of many combinations of factors.

INCOMPLETE MODELS

FOR SOCIAL STUDIES RESEARCH

ASSUMPTIONS	RESEARCH
Reflective Thinking	Metcalf, et al....
Eclectic	Gross, et al....
Environmentalistic	Bruner, et al....



What we need to get good at is analysis and presentation and integration and re-analysis.... Yet we work in a communications environment which can be demonstrated through the following :

"An Hypothetical Case"

I. "Suppose researcher and publisher 'study Y,' an investigation of the pre- and post- 'history course' performance of fifty secondary school students on a critical thinking test..."

Which of the following reports are we most likely to find in the professional literature?

III. "Alternative Reviews of 'Study Y'

A. 'Researcher X reported significant gains in critical thinking skills among fifty secondary secondary school students as a result of a history course. It is not clear whether X taught the course, whether control groups were used, or the level of significance of the results.'

B. 'Researcher X found that secondary history students score higher on critical thinking tests.'

C. 'Though inconclusive, Study Y is a basic contribution to social studies research because of its design simplicity and its potential replicability.'

D. 'Research shows that critical thinking is a very important outcome of history courses' "

What ought to be incorporated in an analysis of "Study Y" are the following questions:

II. "Appropriate questions for researcher X and analysts are:

What were the independent variables?

What were the dependent variables?

What were the intervening variables?

What were the reliability levels of the tests?

What were the validities of the tests?

What populations were sampled?

Were selection procedures appropriate?

What were the time intervals between pre- and post-testing

Upon what theories were the hypotheses based?

Were the results of the two tests significantly different?

Were the tests appropriate for the hypotheses?

How do the results relate to the research hypotheses?

What conclusions does the researcher state?

What other conclusions are implicit in the experimental results?

How are the researcher's conclusions warranted?

What previous research is refuted or supported by the reported findings?

Can the research be replicated?

Has the research been replicated?

What future research is implied by the reported findings?

What, of worth, is derived from the study?

What is the rationale for the worthwhileness judgement?

Quality controls are needed in social studies research. "Where there are few checks on performance, errors are likely to occur. Social studies research, as a field, lacks the systematic quality checks which would exist if analyses of research were conducted in an open forum.

Inappropriate uses of statistics, erroneous applications of randomization, comparisons of groups which are not equivalent, inadequate sampling procedures, projections based upon inconclusive evidence, and unwarranted conclusions are research defects which ought to be and usually have been avoided by social studies researchers. If studies have implemented quality controls, then open forum critical analysis would merely reinforce the positive attributes of the research being evaluated. To have the entire body of social studies research analyzed would seem to be an asset for the field. Having numerous analyses would be even better.

It is entirely possible that the field of social studies has a sound basis which can be demonstrated through research. Its eclecticism may be a great strength. Intuitively, social studies education may have been founded upon warranted assumptions which can be supported by the severest tests of researchers can design. There are other possibilities as well, and these too deserve consideration.

Researchers in any field sometimes make errors, the correction of which would either strengthen or invalidate their findings. Unfortunately, if a social studies researcher wanted

to report an error, one's own or one's reinterpretation of another's studies, there is no adequate forum to which such information could be submitted. The most widely circulated journal reaches only ten to fifteen per cent of the field's practitioners. This creates a predicament and increases the possibility of error being accepted as truth.

The field is highly personalized and may need an impersonal technique for making critical analyses, for criticizing studies without criticizing the researcher who performed the study. Objectivity seems eventually to require a depersonalization.

It is to the advantages of all if a study is critiqued for the assets it may provide and for the errors it may contain. Objectivity does not require defaming of character. Somehow, maybe objectivity will just evolve out of increased emphasis upon research in social studies. The field may need to focus research objectives on ideas, values and procedures, and to de-emphasize personalities. Maybe the way to generate such objectivity is to encourage many researchers to study the same phenomena. This would provide the maximum data, provide built in checks to reduce researcher bias, cancel out minor errors, and de-personalize analysis and implementation of the findings. The dilemma is how to do this without the leverage, available in several fields, of generous financial rewards. Perhaps professional rewards could be a substitute.

Objectivity requires the acceptance of negative results. It is important to know what will not work as what will despite the strong desire to make research results appear positive.

It seems desirable to popularize critical analysis of present and future research in social studies. After all, there are several hundred thousand social studies teachers, in the United States alone, and several thousand social studies professors in colleges and universities. For the millions of social studies students and their teachers, it is important that social studies curricula have sound bases, and that social studies research have meaningful implications for social studies students.

Much of what has been done in the way of research may have been trivial, though, at the same time, a nucleus of concepts and techniques have definitely been developed. These are at the heart of social studies and though they are theoretically, empirically, and practically sound, they are not adequately clear or popularly known. Social studies education does have a body of knowledge and technique. Future researchers might well be directed toward building upon this nucleus. It seems to be associated with reflective thinking, concept development, critical thinking, and value analysis.

Fortunately, a strategy for increasing research quality can reasonably be expected to succeed among social studies researchers. They are few in number and are accessible since they are concentrated near universities and urban centers. They are aspirant, both within the field and in the broader context of educational research. They are young, compared to the average age of personnel in the social studies career field. They are already committed

to systematic inquiry and are already interested in being precise by virtue of having volunteered or being selected for participation in a research project of some sort.

A strategy for improving social studies research quality through wider circulation of reports and careful analysis of results seems timely and deserves thoughtful consideration among leaders in the social studies education field. Each author of a research review has had the goal in mind of laying groundwork for improvement of research quality in the field. The reviewers have received too little attention, generated too little response. This reference is another attempt to stimulate analyses of social studies education research, its usefulness and quality.

"Quality controls in research are desirable, but they can not be assumed to lead automatically 'to changes in social studies curricula or teaching practice.' Nevertheless, they are of value in and of themselves, and therefore deserve careful attention."

Unifying Social Studies Research

"The strategy of unifying the social studies research field into a more concentrated effort with a more limited range seems a logical conclusion following an investigation of the field's research since the 1930s and its history since 1916. There is no assurance, however, that any results of such a concentrated effort would ever be implemented. Tens of hundreds of researchers have daringly tried to make an impact on social studies through

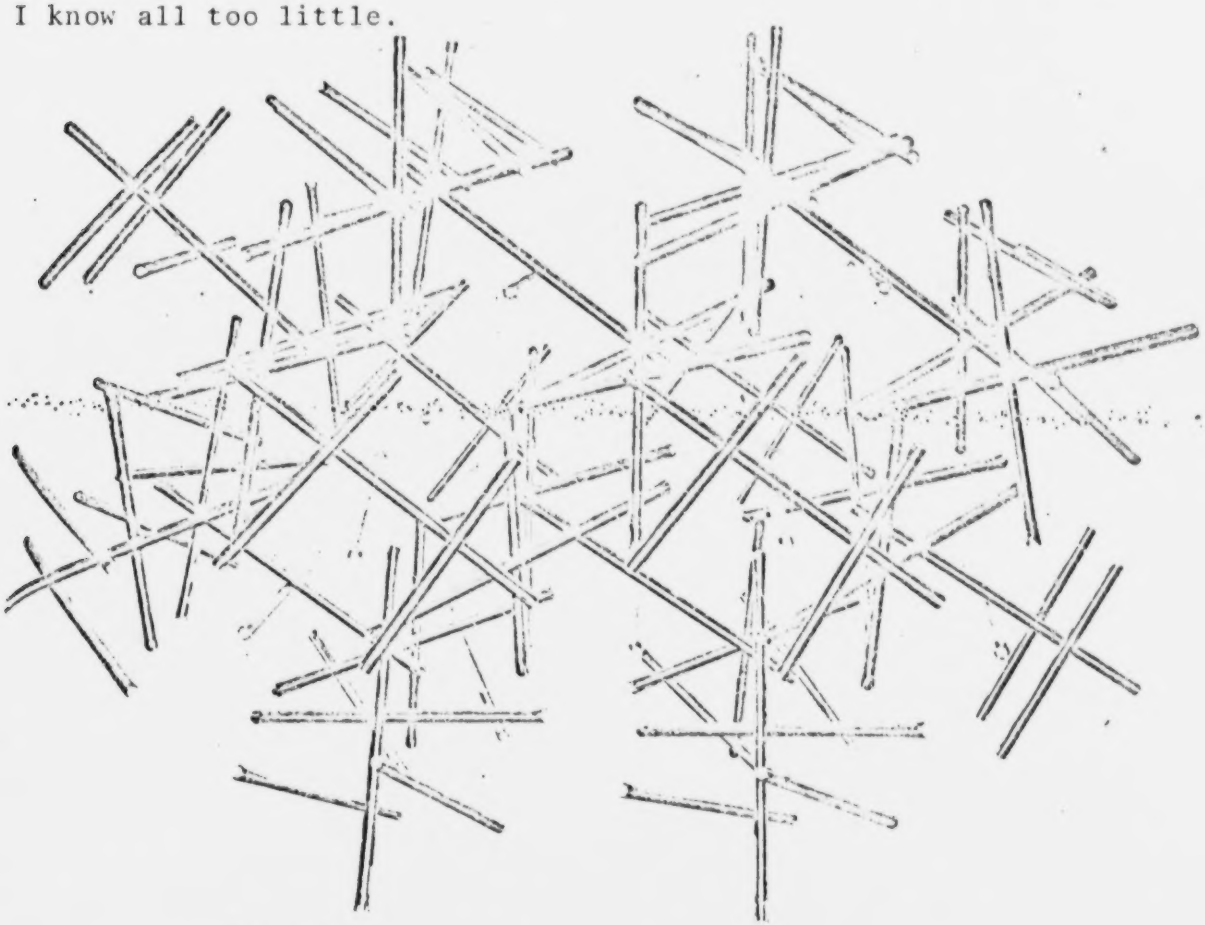
meticulous research projects. They have often found neither recognition or implementation of their findings. Intentional replications of research projects have been rare in social studies. Research has not often caused curricular change in social studies.

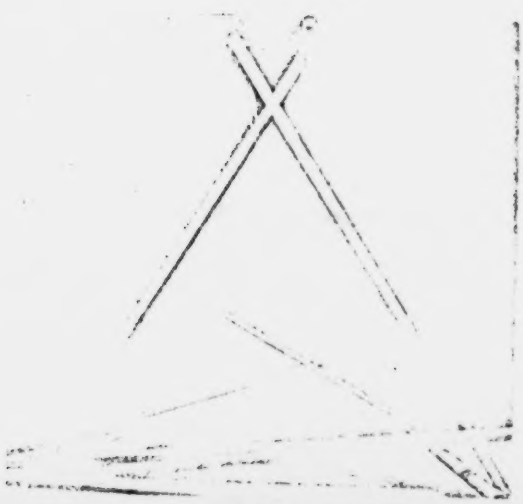
Research has not been a major route to success in social studies, compared, for example, with textbook authorship or work in professional organizations. It has not been determined whether this has led researchers into other roles, generated an out-migrancy from the field, or both.

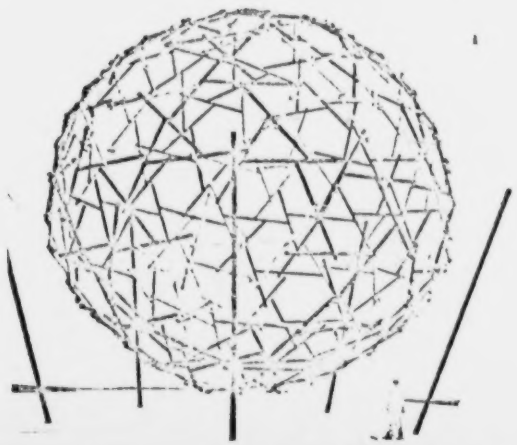
Future analysts of social studies research might begin their work by creating a scenario in their minds. The scenario might be introduced with a question: "Suppose no research had been done in the social studies field, how then would educational practices differ from the present?" Or, on a more positive note, one could ask, "If a social studies curriculum were to be based upon research findings, how would it differ from present curricula?"

Our answer is "quite a bit ... quite a bit indeed!" And to the question in your mind which is "How would social studies curricula differ if based upon research findings?" our reply is simple: "It is 1972. Between now and 1980 it is the job of each of us to coordinate new research efforts, replicate past research and work out the answer. Social studies researchers could provide the mortar that social studies curricula need in order to be transformed from brick pile to brick stack, to integrated

structure. The integrated structure with the most appeal to me personally is not a brick wall, honeycomb cells, concentric circles, a spirochette, the Eiffel Tower, a Boeing 747 jet, a pyramid, or a guided missile. Of great appeal as a model is the interactive dynamic-flexible-open-"tensegrity sphere" about which I know all too little.







APPENDIX A

RESEARCH IN THE TEACHING OF SOCIAL STUDIES
SED 635 (3 Semester Hours)

Dr. James M. Oswald — Syracuse University

Reports of major investigations in the teaching of the social studies. Critical analysis of techniques of research. Students will be encouraged to initiate work on individual problems of their own choice.

The Graduate School Bulletin
Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University, 1970, 66.

My expectation is that students in this course will develop interest and expertise in research techniques and will joyfully design and conduct research of their own while studying works of the past. I want this to be a serious but enjoyable task. I hope, of course, that each participant becomes an outstanding scholar and has a significant impact upon the field of social studies education.

JMO

Class Meetings: Feb 9,16,23; Mar 2,9,16,23,30; Apr 13,20,27; May 4,11,18.

APPENDIX B

RESEARCH IN THE TEACHING OF SOCIAL STUDIES - SED 635 - (sample

GOAL: To improve social studies education.

PURPOSES:
To introduce empirical research.
To introduce design of controlled experiments.
To introduce interpretation of research reports.
To introduce research literature relating to social studies education.
To introduce university research resources.
To introduce research proposal writing skills.
To introduce dissertation proposal writing skills.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Given experience with research, observation, analysis, and literature review, each student will design, conduct, and evaluate an experiment involving subjects in social studies programs.

2. Given a review of test literature and presentation of requirements for objective instruments, each student will design and field test an instrument which measures performance in social studies programs.

3. Given access to university libraries, each student will analyze and critique in writing: one review of social studies research; two articles in Social Education; two doctoral dissertations in social studies education (one from Syracuse University and one from elsewhere); five social studies research reports from at least three research journals; and three books cited in the course bibliography or prepare a bibliography of articles related to a topic approved by both student and instructor.

4. Given prearranged time, each student will present to peers: the design, rationale, instrumentation, findings, and evaluation of the study specified in objective one.

5. Given presentations of studies by each participant, each student will rate each of the studies on a scale from highly significant to social studies education to insignificant to social studies education.

6. Given no less than one appointment with the instructor, each student will state short and long term career goals and objectives; will contract for grades A, B, C, D, or F; and will provide an evaluation of the course up to the point of the appointment.

7. Given fourteen class meetings and achievement of objectives one through six, each student will prepare a written evaluation of the course.

8. Given objectives one through five, students who choose may submit grant proposals and/or dissertation proposals for research in social studies education.

NOTES

1. James M. Oswald, compiler, Research in Social Studies and Social Science Education: Introduction, Analyses, and Reviews of Research (ERIC ChESS, 855 Broadway, Boulder, Colorado 80302, in press), 24.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid, ii

4. Ibid, 24-25

5. "Research in the Teaching of Social Studies - SED 635" a syllabus used at Syracuse University during 1971, six pages. See Appendix A and B.

6. Op. cit., 34-36.

7. Ibid, 36-40.

8. Ibid, 42.

9. Ibid, 43.

10. Ibid, 43.

11. Tensegrity spheres are the discovery-inventions of Richard Buckminster Fuller. They are based on the principle of universe which says that all things exist between tension and compression. Integrity and coherency are the result of balance between the two forces of compression (towardness) and tension (apartness). These illustrations are from John McHale, Richard Buckminster Fuller (George Braziller, 215 Park Avenue, South, New York City 10003, 1962), figures 32, 41, 42 and 43.